

HOME GROUNDS FACT SHEET



Cornell University
Cooperative Extension
Nassau County



Horticulture Center
Demonstration & Community Gardens
at East Meadow Farm
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Holiday Cactus

Christmas cactus (*Schlumbergera bridgesii*)

Description

Flat, leaf-like stems, jointed, with rounded teeth on the margin. Fuchsia, hanging flowers are composed of several rings of petals that bloom around Christmas.

Culture

Soil mix should be 1 part loam and 1 part sand or vermiculite. From April to June, the plant should receive indirect light and plenty of water. Fertilize with houseplant food once each month in spring. From July to August, the plant should be kept dry to promote development of buds; it may be kept outdoors. From September to December, it does best at 50°-65°F and should be kept away from all light from 5 p.m. to 8 a.m. for 8-10 weeks to force bloom by Christmas. Water sparingly and mist 2 to 3 times a week. The plant must not be moved or turned, and there should be no temperature changes or drafts.

Propagation

Tip cuttings taken in early fall should be placed in sand, peat moss, vermiculite, or a combination of the materials.



Thanksgiving cactus (*Schlumbergera truncata*)

Description

Stem joints with pointed, forward projecting teeth and flowers of varied colors with yellowish anthers.

Culture

Same as for Christmas Cactus, but move one month ahead; for dry culture begin in June. For night heat (50°-65°F) begin the end of August, if cool.



Easter cactus (*Rhipsalidopsis Gaertneri*)

Description

Very similar to Christmas Cactus. Has flat, segmented leaf-like shoots. However, the joints are sawtoothed and pointed forward.

Culture

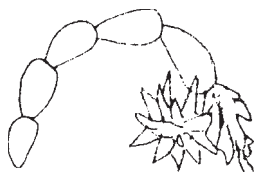
Essentially the same as for Christmas Cactus. From May to September, the plant needs moderate watering with frequent water sprays. Keep in indirect sunlight at temperatures between 70°-80°F. From October to November, very little water is required to promote bud formation, and 50°F temperatures are ideal. Raise temperature to around 65°F from December through February when buds begin to appear. If they are grown together at 60°F night temperatures, after their normal blooming season they will flower almost simultaneously at or near Easter.

Propagation

Tip cuttings taken in late winter.

Problems

Mealybug and scale. Use only those materials that are labelled for use on holiday cactus types.



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